

REMARKS

Claims 3-10 and 12 are pending. Applicant respectfully submits no new material is presented herein.

Claims 3-10 and 12 Recite Patentable Subject Matter

Claims 3-10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the AAPA in view of Fujitsu (JP 09-122610). Claims 5-10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the AAPA in view of Fujitsu and U.S. Patent No. 6,158,721 to Katou et al. (hereinafter “Katou”). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections.

Claims 3 and 4 each recite, among other features, that a surface of a wafer storage case of synthetic resin is coated with a coating agent. Claims 3 and 4 also recite that a coating layer of the coating agent remains across the surface of the wafer storage case after a cleaning step using pure water.

The Office Action admits the AAPA does not teach or suggest: 1) drying the wafer storage case coated with the coating agent (claim 3 only); 2) that a coating layer of the coating agent (i.e., the surfactant) remains across the surface of the wafer storage case after the pure water cleaning steps; and 3) that dust generation from the surface of the wafer storage case is prevented by the aforementioned coating layer of the coating agent.

The Office Action asserts Fujitsu teaches a process for cleaning and drying various articles that is analogous to the process taught by the AAPA. The Office Action further asserts it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use the Fujitsu process as the wafer storage case cleaning process of the AAPA with

reasonable expectation of success as the Fujitsu process of cleaning and removing dust is applicable to hollow articles and resin articles.

The Applicant respectfully submits that, for reasons clearly explained in the originally filed Specification, one of ordinary skill in the art would not find it obvious to look to the teachings of Fujitsu to overcome the above-listed and Office Action admitted deficiencies of the AAPA.

In particular, the Applicant respectfully acknowledges Fujitsu explicitly teaches immersing a washed object in an aqueous solution, which contains a surfactant. See the Abstract, as well as paragraphs [0007], [0008], [0009], [0013], [00014], [0015], [0016], [0017], etc. of Fujitsu. However, Fujitsu clearly and unambiguously teaches that the aqueous solution in which the object is immersed is impressed or charged with an ultrasonic wave. See the Abstract, as well as paragraphs [0007], [0008], [0009], [0013], [00014], [0015], [0016], [0017], etc. of Fujitsu.

As the Applicant explained in the paragraph on page 4, lines 3-11 of the originally filed Specification, the surface of a storage case made of synthetic resin is hydrophobic, has poor wettability, and therefore should avoid contact with water. Moreover, even when subjected to physical energy, such as ultrasonic waves, a physical action thereof is not sufficiently transferred to the surfaces of the synthetic resin and particles thereon so that efficient particle removal cleaning is not performed, which obviously results in poor cleaning results. As noted by the Applicant in the originally filed Specification, i.e., the paragraph bridging pages 4-5, wafer storage cases made of synthetic resin constantly generate particles from the surface of the synthetic resin, regardless of the number of times the synthetic resin wafer storage case is subjected to high purity

cleaning, because the surface of the synthetic resin is porous. Put simply, the Applicant clearly explains that subjecting a storage case made of synthetic resin to ultrasonic waves is not desirable since the surface of the synthetic resin material from which the storage case is made will continuously generate particles due to the porous nature of synthetic material.

As noted above, Claims 3 and 4 each recite, among other features, that a surface of a wafer storage case of synthetic resin is coated with a coating agent.

The Applicant respectfully submits that it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use the Fujitsu cleaning process of impressing an aqueous solution in which an article is immersed with ultrasonic waves as the wafer storage case made of resin material cleaning process of the AAPA since articles made of synthetic resin constantly generate particles from the surface of the synthetic resin because of the porous nature of resinous materials. Put simply, the Applicant respectfully submits that it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use the Fujitsu cleaning process, which entails impressing ultrasonic waves onto an aqueous solution in which an object is immersed, as the resin wafer storage case cleaning process of the AAPA because the surface of the resin material would continuously generate particles due to the porous nature of synthetic resin, which would inherently and obviously defeat the purpose of the cleaning process.

For the above-discussed reasons, the Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action has not established *prima facie* obviousness of rejected independent Claims 3 and 4. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits Claims 3 and 4 are not rendered obvious in view of the AAP and Fujitsu and should be deemed allowable.

Claims 2, 5-10 and 12 depend, either directly or indirectly, from Claims 3-4. It is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims be deemed allowable for the same reasons Claims 3-4 are allowable, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Katou simply teaches controlling the resistivity of pure water used in a cleaning process and does not address or overcome the drawbacks of the AAPA and/or Fujitsu teachings.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits pending Claims 5-9 and 12 are not rendered obvious by the teachings of the AAPA, Fujitsu, and/or Katou. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits pending Claims 5-9 and 12 should be deemed allowable for at least the same reasons Claims 3-4 are allowable, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, allowance of Claims 3-10 and 12, and the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowability are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, **referencing docket number 107242-00021.**

Respectfully submitted,
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